

Digital Deception and The Ethics of Making Money from False Stories

Akinmade Oyinkansola¹, Ajisafe Ibikunle Olayiwola²

^{1,2}Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Department of Media and Communication Studies.

ABSTRACT: In the age of influencer culture, authenticity has become both a currency and a performance. This commentary examines the recurring case of Nigerian content creator and self-styled relationship expert Blessing Okoro, popularly known as Blessing CEO, who has twice fabricated life-threatening illness narratives to solicit financial donations from her online followers. Most recently, in March 2026, she appeared on Instagram weeping and shaving her hair, claiming a stage four breast cancer diagnosis. Within days, medical professionals publicly identified serious inconsistencies in her claims, a third party alleged that the uploaded medical documents had been forged using her own records, and a live televised encounter on Arise News on April 4, 2026 exposed the deception before a national audience. Crucially, this was not her first offence a near-identical pattern of fabrication and monetisation had occurred previously, raising urgent questions not merely about individual misconduct but about the structural conditions that enable and reward repeat digital deception. Using this case as a primary case study, this commentary explores the ethical implications of monetizing false narratives, the commodification of audience compassion, the phenomenon of repeat offending in unregulated digital spaces, and the erosion of trust in digital media ecosystems. It situates the case within broader debates on influencer accountability, parasocial relationships, and the challenges of regulating online spaces in Nigeria and across Africa. Ultimately, the commentary argues that such episodes are symptomatic of deeper structural failures in platform governance, media regulation, and audience literacy, and calls for concrete policy responses from Nigerian regulators, platform operators, and media institutions.

KEYWORDS: Influencer culture, media ethics, media regulations, audience literacy, digital deception.

1. INTRODUCTION

Influencer culture has changed the media world in a big way, bringing in a new kind of celebrity built around feeling close to people, seeming relatable, and acting like they are showing their real selves. Influencers are different from traditional public figures because they build their reputations by sharing personal stories, everyday moments, and carefully chosen snapshots of their lives. This kind of dynamic leads to what researchers call “parasocial relationships,” meaning one-sided emotional connections where people feel a real bond with creators even though they do not actually know them and are, in fact, strangers (Horton & Wohl, 1956). These connections can be really strong, they build loyalty, make people more willing to chip in financially, and make it harder to tell where friendship ends and fandom begins.

This economy runs on authenticity, or at least on looking authentic. Followers tend to connect more with influencers who feel like genuine people who talk about their struggles and insecurities as well as their wins. But the thing is, that same expectation can also open the door to some serious manipulation. When personal stories start getting treated like products, the truth can start to feel like something people bargain over. An influencer’s ability to make people feel understood can turn into real income, whether that’s from brand deals, subscriptions, or people donating directly. In this situation, deception is not just about breaking trust, it warps the basic groundwork that influencer culture depends on.

Nothing shows this more clearly than the ongoing case involving Blessing Okoro, better known as Blessing CEO. She is a Nigerian content creator who calls herself a relationship expert and has built a large following online. In March 2026, she posted on Instagram while crying, shaved her head, and said she had been diagnosed with stage four breast cancer. Her online post begged for sympathy and in turn public donations. She planned to auction her properties to pay for treatment. Donations of at least thirteen million naira came in from followers who were touched by what seemed like a devastating personal crisis (Legit.ng, 2026).

Within a few days, the story started to fall apart. Medical staff pointed out in public that parts of her story did not line up with what is medically possible. A member of the public claimed that the medical documents Blessing CEO uploaded were faked using another person’s own medical records (Legit.ng, 2026). On Saturday, April 4, 2026, she went on Arise News live, and a doctor in the studio calmly went through her statements and pointed out why they didn’t hold up. When she was questioned, she backed away from saying she had stage four cancer and called it a “miscommunication,” which ended up sparking a lot of public anger. Not long after that, she turned off her Instagram account (allAfrica, 2026).

What makes this case especially important for media ethics research is not just how big or bold it was, but that it was not a one-off. Blessing's CEO had done something very similar before, she made up a personal crisis. The fact that this behavior keeps happening and that it was even possible, and seemed to make money points to something really worrying about how digital media is set up in Nigeria and in other places too. This paper says the Blessing CEO case is not just about one person's moral lapse, it points to a bigger problem i.e. a system that does not have the rules, platform responsibility, or public know-how needed to prevent, spot, and deal with large-scale digital deception.

2. BACKGROUND: INFLUENCER CULTURE AND HOW ATTENTION TURNS INTO MONEY IN NIGERIA

2.1 The economy built around attention

Since the mid-2010s, researchers have often talked about social media platforms as part of an "attention economy," where people's attention is treated like something that can be bought, sold, and exchanged for things like ad money, brand deals, and even direct cash gifts (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Marwick, 2015). In this economy, what gets sold is not really a product, it is a person, or more accurately, a carefully put-together version of who they are. Influencers sit in a pretty advantaged spot in this setup and their followers numbers turn into social clout, and they can cash that in through sponsored posts, affiliate links, and more and more through direct support from fans, made easy by mobile payments, online transfers, and digital tipping platforms. In Nigeria, the influencer economy has taken off quickly as more people have gained access to mobile internet and as platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become widely used. The country's young population, heavy social media use, and lively pop culture have helped shape a generation of content creators who can reach large audiences at home and across the diaspora (Willems, 2019). That growth, though, has moved faster than the rules and oversight needed to guide how digital creators behave. The end result is a situation where influencer culture offers big rewards, but there is not much real accountability. As the Blessing CEO case shows, that mix makes it easier for exploitation to happen.

2.2 Authenticity as Something That Holds Value

It is a bit ironic, but an influencer's value depends on whether people see them as genuinely authentic. Audiences can form parasocial relationships, meaning one-sided emotional connections that feel a bit like real friendships, when they keep following a creator's personal story over time (Horton & Wohl, 1956). These connections often make people more willing to financially support creators, especially when the influencer seems vulnerable or like they could use help (Abidin, 2018). That is why authentic storytelling is not just an artistic choice, it can also be used as a strategic tool to help bring in revenue. Showing vulnerability like being sick, grieving, or going through money troubles can have a strong impact, because it taps into people's deep instincts to care and be generous. This situation is not unique to Nigeria alone, but it feels especially relevant in a society where people place a strong value on sticking together as a community and feeling responsible for helping those who are struggling (Oyedemi, 2015). When an influencer with a large audience says they have a serious illness and asks for support, people often respond out of a strong sense of shared care and solidarity, and that reaction does not just fade away quickly even if some doubts start to surface.

2.3 Making Money from Compassion

Platforms like mobile money apps, bank transfers, and more casual digital tipping or giving options have made it much easier for audiences to support creators directly. While this makes patronage more accessible and allows for real community support, it also creates room for empathy-driven scams, when someone intentionally makes up a personal crisis to get money (Kumar & Verma, 2022). The Blessing CEO case shows a worrying mix whereby a made-up personal crisis, a parasocial audience that was already invested, a culture that tends to praise giving to the community, and an easy, frictionless way to send money online. The outcome was that she quickly collected at least thirteen million naira from followers who thought they were helping a woman who was fighting to stay alive (Legit.ng, 2026, Vanguard, 2026).

3. CASE STUDY: BLESSING CEO (A TRACK RECORD OF REPEATED DECEPTION)

3.1 The First Incident: Setting the Pattern

The 2026 cancer hoax was not the first time Blessing's CEO tried to make money off a crisis. On an earlier occasion, she fabricated a story in April 2019 of owning an entire mansion in Enugu as a single mother. The real owner, a businessman Onye Eze, exposed the lie and got her arrested. That earlier incident drew public criticism and got media attention, but in the end, there were no real legal consequences, no action from the platform, and no meaningful accountability.

This commentary suggests that the lack of consequences is not just a small detail in the story it is actually a key reason these events keep happening. The first incident set the pattern that has led to the making up a believable personal emergency. Using this one-sided closeness with the audience to seek donations, cash in on people's sympathy, and then, if anyone questions it, claim it wasn't a scam at all but money people chose to give as a kind of tip for the performance and the character. This approach does not just work financially; it also helps influencers reputation in a practical sense. Even serious controversy brought attention, and that attention helped them stay visible and relevant on social media.

3.2 The 2026 Incident: How Things Escalated and What Came to Light

On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, the Blessing CEO shared a video on Instagram saying she had been diagnosed with stage four breast cancer (YEN.com.gh, 2026). In later videos, she shared more details, saying it started as a lump that doctors had previously told her it was not cancer, but tests later reportedly found it was malignant and had spread. She looked clearly upset, and at one point she shaved her head on camera, saying her hair had been falling out and that she was stuck in fear and denial (WithinNigeria, 2026). Along with opening up about her feelings, she also shared her bank account information and said she planned to auction her wigs, real estate, and other belongings to help cover the costs of surgery and chemotherapy.

The reply came quickly and had real substance. Donations started coming in from followers who were touched by what seemed like a heartbreaking personal revelation. Still, people quickly grew sceptical, partly because they knew about how she had behaved in the past. Medical staff pointed out a few things that did not line up clinically with stage 4 breast cancer as this usually means it has spread to distant organs, and people typically do not start losing hair until after chemotherapy begins (Legit.ng, 2026). These details made her story seem less believable and led people to look more closely at the medical records she had posted online.

Things took a sharp turn when a woman named Miss Deborah Mbara claimed that the medical report the Blessing CEO had uploaded was actually her own, but had been altered and reused (Legit.ng, 2026). If this claim is proven true, it would shift the situation from emotional manipulation to possible document forgery, which could be treated as a criminal issue under Nigerian law. Donors started asking for their money back in public. One well-known businessman, Alafaa Kariboye-Igbo, often called Oil Money, asked for a refund of twenty million naira and gave a seven-day deadline, saying he would take legal action (Legit.ng, 2026).

On Saturday, April 4, 2026, Blessing CEO appeared on Arise News, and Nigerian doctor Dr. Adefunke Arowolo was on the programme as well. During the encounter, Dr Arowolo methodically questioned the medical claims. She even reached out to the doctor whose name was listed on the uploaded documents, and that doctor reportedly said he had nothing to do with the report (Legit.ng, 2026). Under continued questioning, Blessing CEO backed away from her earlier statement and said the stage four diagnosis was just a “miscommunication”, a description many people found hard to believe, considering how dramatic, emotional, and detailed her original account was (Legit.ng, 2026). She said she had received thirteen million naira in donations and made it clear she was not going to apologise. On the evening of April 4, 2026, her Instagram account was taken down (Legit.ng, 2026). The platform itself did not take any action that was recorded.

3.3 How Arise TV Fits In: Using Broadcast Media as a Way to Hold People Accountable

From a media studies angle, it is worth pointing out that Arise News became the main place where accountability played out in both the Blessing CEO case and, in February 2026, the widely followed national story in which former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai admitted to intercepting the National Security Adviser’s communications (Arise TV, 2026). In both cases, live TV shows how immediate it is, how easily it can turn confrontational, and how publicly visible it ended up working better as a way to hold people accountable than other platforms and the rules of official regulatory action. This pattern brings up a key question: what role should broadcast media still play in holding digital players accountable in situations where online platforms and formal institutions haven’t been enough?

4. ETHICAL REVIEW

4.1 Deception as Something That Gets Packaged and Sold as Content

The Blessing CEO case brings up some serious ethical questions about what online creators owe their audiences, and how easily those audiences can be taken advantage of. At the heart of it, this deception is a deliberate, thought-out way of taking advantage of people’s compassion. By faking a terminal illness, and putting a lot of effort into making it look real by crying on camera and even shaving her head, she turned people’s sympathy into something she could cash in on, taking advantage of the trust her followers had built up in her over years of watching her content.

In more traditional media settings, making up a story like this could get the person behind it disciplined at work, seriously damage their reputation, and possibly lead to legal trouble. In the influencer economy, though, deception can start to look like just part of the act, which makes it harder to tell where storytelling ends, genuine cases raised and fraud begins. Hochschild’s (1983) idea of emotional labour helps make sense of this, using carefully managed emotional expressions to get a certain result is not a new thing, but the digital world has stripped away many of the institutional limits that used to keep it from going too far.

4.2 How Parasocial Bonds Get Turned into a Weapon

The case shows, in a very clear way, how parasocial relationships can be used as a tool to manipulate people. People did not donate just out of some vague sense of charity. They gave because they felt a real emotional connection to Blessing CEO as a person after following her story, interacting with her content, and gradually getting to know the persona she projected over time. This emotional attachment, formed through long-term one-sided engagement, was ultimately used against them. The close, personal feel of the influencer relationship, which is usually what gives people a sense of community and connection, ended up being the very thing that made exploitation possible.

4.3 Repeat Offenders and the Accountability Gap

What bothers me most about this case might be the fact that it keeps happening again. The fact that the Blessing CEO could pull off almost the same kind of deception again suggests the first incident did not really discourage her at all. This is not just about one person's moral shortcomings, it points to a deeper problem in the systems that should have stepped in and created accountability after the first offense.

Compared with journalists or broadcasters, influencers in Nigeria mostly work in spaces that are not really regulated. Platforms might take down harmful content in specific situations, but there are not many practical ways to make people repair the damage, apply real consequences, or stop offenders from getting back to business. The Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act 2024 and the Consumer Protection Council Act may provide some legal ways for people to seek redress, but how they apply to influencer fraud is still not well defined and enforcement is uneven. This lack of accountability encourages people to offend again, because it makes the benefits of deception usually feel bigger than the risks.

4.4 Document Forgery: When Deception Turns into a Crime

The claim that Blessing CEO faked someone else's medical records to back up her cancer story feels like a major step beyond just trying to tug at people's emotions. If this is confirmed, it could amount to a criminal offence under several parts of Nigerian law, including the Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act 2024, which deals with making and using fake electronic documents. This aspect of the case shows why it is not enough to treat influencer deception as just an ethics issue or something that only affects reputation. When making things up crosses the line into forgery or fraud, it should be treated as a matter for the criminal justice system. Not responding in that way after the earlier incident may have encouraged the behavior that came afterward.

4.5 How trust wears away over time, and the unintended harm it can cause

Beyond the direct harm done to donors, the Blessing CEO case also hurts the wider world of legitimate online fundraising and the work of building real digital communities. When big, widely seen scams do not get dealt with, people start doubting online pleas in general, and that will end up hurting real causes and real creators. When people lose trust in the digital world, it is not just a theoretical issue. It can directly harm the most vulnerable, especially those who rely on support from their communities because government welfare is not enough.

5. COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES: A PATTERN SEEN AROUND THE WORLD

The Blessing CEO scandal stands out because it was so brazen and happened again, but it is not the only case like this. Around the world, you can see similar incidents that point to a worrying trend in influencer culture that some people make up personal crises to draw sympathy and get financial support.

In Australia, Belle Gibson drew worldwide attention after the wellness influencer falsely said she had cured terminal brain cancer through diet and alternative treatments, and then built a major business around that made-up illness, including a bestselling book and a widely used app. She was later fined under Australian consumer law for misleading conduct, which shows how far made-up health stories can spread as a business and also that regulators may step in when the relevant institutions are motivated enough to do so (Donovan, 2015).

In the United Kingdom, several social media personalities have run into legal trouble over dishonest fundraising, including situations where someone faked a cancer diagnosis or made up personal hardship to get donations. These cases helped shape guidance from the Fundraising Regulator and the Advertising Standards Authority about what responsibilities online creators have when they make financial appeals.

In Nigeria, the Blessing CEO case fits into a wider trend some people call "empathy entrepreneurship," where people use stories of hardship in a calculated way to make money online. In Nigeria, a mix of cultural and economic factors like heavy social media use, strong expectations of community support, limited access to formal welfare systems, and loose digital oversight can leave people especially vulnerable to this kind of exploitation. Dealing with it means shaping the response around the situation here, rather than just copying what's used in other regulatory settings.

6. NIGERIA'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: WHAT'S MISSING AND WHERE THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE

Nigeria has several laws and regulations that could apply to digital deception and influencer fraud, but they still have not been used much or clearly in this area. The Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act 2024 makes various types of online behavior illegal, such as using electronic devices to carry out fraud, creating and sharing false information, and misusing electronic documents in a dishonest way. The claim that medical documents were forged in the Blessing CEO case seems like it would clearly be covered by this law, but as of the time of writing, there have not been any reports of criminal charges or a prosecution.

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) is meant to protect consumers from misleading practices, and that responsibility likely also covers deceptive online fundraising. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has put out guidelines on data protection and how people should behave online, but when it comes to influencers, there

still is not much enforcement. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) oversees electronic communications, but so far it has not put out clear, specific guidance for social media creators or online fundraising.

Not having a clear set of rules specifically for the influencer industry similar to the guidance from the UK's Advertising Standards Authority leaves a real gap, and this case brings that problem into sharp focus. Professional groups in the media and communications space, like the Nigerian Press Council and the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, have usually paid more attention to established media outlets than to individual digital creators. As the line between traditional professional media and influencer content keeps getting less clear, it seems reasonable to argue that the ethical standards used in professional media should also apply to digital creators.

7. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MEDIA ETHICS AND WHAT PLATFORMS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR

7.1 When Entertainment and Real Life Start to Blend Together

The Blessing CEO case shows how digital platforms blur the line between entertainment, personal storytelling, and statements presented as fact. When a content creator cries on camera, shaves her head, and says she has been given a terminal diagnosis, it does not feel like a scripted scene. It feels like people are being pulled in to react the way they would to a real person going through a real crisis. The ethical responsibilities that come with that invitation do not become any less important just because the creator is working in a digital, casual, and business-focused setting.

7.2 Being Part of the Problem Through Algorithms

Social media platforms play a big role in creating the kind of environment where these kinds of deceptions can take hold. Algorithms that prioritize emotional, sensational, and easy-to-share posts end up encouraging people to share more intense personal details like illness, grief, or a crisis because that kind of content is the easiest to exploit and manipulate. Platforms make money from how much attention crisis-related posts attract, no matter whether those posts are real or made up. Changing the incentives that reward sensational content and constant "crisis" storylines is a deeper challenge than any single enforcement step. It means working with platforms on how their products are designed, not just on how they enforce policies.

7.3 How familiar is the audience with the topic?

The incident also shows how important it is to understand media and have strong digital literacy. How quickly many Nigerian social media users spotted gaps and contradictions in Blessing CEO's story makes it seem like people did have the tools to judge it critically, but they did not use those tools consistently. Building stronger media literacy, especially about how influencer culture works, where it can be exploited, how parasocial relationships form, and how online fundraising can be gamed, is a key part of any well-rounded effort to address digital deception (Mihailidis & Theodossiou, 2019). Media literacy education in Nigeria still is not strong enough, whether in schools or through informal learning, and adding critical digital literacy to school curricula should be treated as a top policy priority.

8. SUGGESTED POLICY STEPS

Based on the analysis in this paper, the following policy suggestions are aimed at regulators, platform operators, and media organizations in Nigeria.

First, the FCCPC and the relevant law enforcement agencies should look into the Blessing CEO case using the rules already in the Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act 2024 and the consumer protection laws, and consider prosecution if the evidence backs it up. Not holding anyone accountable after the first incident helped set things up for the second one. A clear enforcement action would show that repeated online fraud is likely to lead to real legal consequences.

Second, the NCC and NITDA should put together clear, creator-focused rules for online content, including how to be transparent when asking for donations or support, what they need to disclose, and what could happen if they mislead people. This guidance should be written with input from industry, civil society groups, and the communities that will be affected.

Third, social media platforms operating in Nigeria should put in place clear rules for health-related fundraising posts. These should include checks to confirm any medical claims used to ask for donations, and straightforward ways for people to get refunds or seek remedies if a post is later found to be deceptive.

Fourth, Nigeria's media and communications sector should work on a voluntary ethics code for online content creators, with backing from professional groups, universities, and civil society organisations. A code like that would spell out clear professional standards and give people a reputational reason to stick to them.

Fifth, Nigeria should make media literacy a core part of the secondary school curriculum, so young people have the skills to judge what they see online, spot common manipulation tricks, and make more informed choices about donating through digital platforms.

CONCLUSION

The Blessing CEO scandal is not just about one person behaving badly. It also shows the bigger setup that makes it easy to deceive people online and, given today's rules and enforcement, can even seem like a sensible move for some. By faking an illness and

taking money from followers' sympathy, Blessing CEO showed how shaky trust can be in influencer culture, how easily empathy turns into something people can cash in on, and how a lack of real accountability can make someone feel free to do it again. This case is coming at a time that feels especially important for Nigeria's media. Arise News, which is where she got the most public attention, has also, in recent months, been the place where other major breaches of public trust have come to light. It is worth more research that broadcast TV still seems to be a main way of holding people in power accountable, even with so many digital platforms spreading everywhere.

In the end, this case makes us face a question at the core of digital culture which is what happens when people start treating truth as optional? This case shows that trust ends up taking the hit not just trust in individual creators, but also trust in the broader digital world and in the shared sense of community that is supposed to make online giving matter. Keeping that trust is not just about each person trying to be more ethical. It also takes a shared push for tighter rules, platform designs that are easier to hold accountable, and more serious investment in helping Nigerian audiences build stronger media literacy. The tools to support accountability are already available. The open question is whether regulators, platforms, and institutions will actually be willing to use them.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author made use of AI-assisted tools (specifically, MS Word spelling and grammar proofing, and ChatGPT) for the purposes of language editing, structure and improvement of readability. The AI tool was not used to generate original arguments, analysis, theoretical framing, or citations. All intellectual content, scholarly reasoning, and academic judgments remain entirely the work of the author. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the manuscript.

FUNDING STATEMENT

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This study was conducted independently without any grant or sponsorship from public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding bodies.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study did not involve human participants, and therefore no informed consent was required. The research relied solely on secondary data and publicly available materials. All sources of information were properly acknowledged to ensure academic integrity and to avoid plagiarism. The study adhered to standard ethical guidelines in the collection, analysis, and reporting of data. The author ensured accuracy, transparency, and objectivity throughout the research process, and no ethical issues arose in the course of the study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) STATEMENT

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Abidin, C. (2018). Internet celebrity: Understanding fame online. Emerald Publishing.
2. allAfrica (2026, April 6). Nigeria: Blessing CEO goes dark on Instagram following heated medical grill over cancer claim. allAfrica.com. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202604060087.html>
3. Arise TV (2026, February 13). Prime Time interview with Nasir El-Rufai. Arise News.
4. Arise TV (2026, April 4). Blessing CEO cancer claim: Live televised examination. Arise News.
5. Davenport, T. H., & Beck, J. C. (2001). The attention economy: Understanding the new currency of business. Harvard Business Review Press.
6. Donovan, R. (2015). The Belle Gibson scandal and the ethics of wellness influencing. Australian Journal of Communication, 42(3), 15-29.
7. Hochschild, A. R. (1983). The managed heart: Commercialisation of human feeling. University of California Press.
8. Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. Psychiatry, 19(3), 215-229.
9. Kumar, R., & Verma, S. (2022). Empathy-based scams in the age of digital fundraising. Journal of Cyber Ethics, 7(2), 112-130.
10. Legit.ng (2026, April 4). Alleged cancer: Blessing CEO struggles with medical details as doctor questions her on national TV. Legit.ng. <https://www.legit.ng/entertainment/celebrities/1704127>
11. Legit.ng (2026, April 4). Blessing CEO takes a major action as backlash over her stage 4 breast cancer claim intensifies. Legit.ng. <https://www.legit.ng/entertainment/celebrities/1704109>
12. Legit.ng (2026, April 4). Miscommunication: Blessing CEO makes confession about stage 4 cancer claim. Legit.ng. <https://www.legit.ng/entertainment/celebrities/1704069>

13. Marwick, A. E. (2015). Instafame: Luxury selfies in the attention economy. *Public Culture*, 27(1), 137-160.
14. Mihailidis, P., & Theodossiou, T. (2019). Media literacy and the challenge of fake news. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 11(2), 1-13.
15. Oyedemi, T. D. (2015). Digital inequalities and implications for social inequalities: A study of Internet penetration amongst university students in South Africa. *Telematics and Informatics*, 29(3), 302-313.
16. Pew Research Center. (2023). Trust in online content creators: A global perspective. <https://www.pewresearch.org>
17. Singer, P. (2010). *The expanding circle: Ethics, evolution, and moral progress*. Princeton University Press.
18. Ward, S. J. A. (2015). *Ethics and the media: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
19. Willems, W. (2019). The politics of things: Digital media, urban space, and the materiality of publics. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(8), 1192-1208.
20. WithinNigeria (2026, April 4). Alleged fake cancer fundraiser: Could Blessing CEO face jail time? WithinNigeria.com. <https://www.withinnigeria.com/2026/04/04/alleged-fake-cancer-fundraiser-could-blessing-ceo-face-jail-time/>
21. Vanguard News (April, 2026). Blessing CEO rejects calls for apology, says N13m raised. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2026/04/cancer-blessing-ceo-rejects-calls-for-apology-says-n13m-raised/>
22. YEN.com.gh (2026, March 25). Blessing CEO weeps in viral video after announcing stage 4 cancer diagnosis. YEN.com.gh. <https://yen.com.gh/entertainment/celebrities/301801>

s